

Message Text

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15
ACTION EA-14

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R 090458Z AUG 74
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5294
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E.O. 11652: N/A
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SUBJECT: EXPLO '74

1. DR. "BILLY" BRIGHT, PRESIDENT OF THE CAMPUS CRUSADE FOR CHRIST INTERNATIONAL, ACCOMPANIED BY MR. NILS BECKER, FOREIGN DIRECTOR OF EXPLO '74 AND REV. KIM JOON-GON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF EXPLO '74 AND KOREAN CAMPUS CRUSADE FOR CHRIST CALLED ON AMBASSADOR HABIB, AUG 8 TO EXPLAIN PLANS AND OBJECTIVES OF EXPLO '74. EXPLO IS INTERNATIONAL EVANGELICAL CONGRESS SCHEDULED FOR SEOUL, AUG 13-18. THIS IS SECOND SUCH CONGRESS ARRANGED BY CAMPUS CRUSADE, THE FIRST ONE HAVING BEEN HELD IN DALLAS IN 1972.

2. ACCORDING TO DR. BRIGHT, SOME SIX TO SEVEN HUNDRED THOUSAND PERSONS ARE EXPECTED TO ATTEND, INCLUDING THREE THOUSAND FOREIGNERS OF WHO EIGHT HUNDRED WILL BE AMERICANS. EXPLO '74 WILL CONSIST NOT ONLY OF MASS PRAYER MEETING EVERY EVENING ON THE OLD AIRSTRIP OF YOIDO BUT ALSO ALL DAY TRAINING SESSION IN EVANGELISM IN SOME 4,000 CALSSROOMS THROUGHOUT THE CITY.

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3. VISITORS INDICATED THAT THEY HAD FULL COOPERATION

OF ROKG AND THAT KOREA WAS ONE OF MOST RECEPTIVE COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD FOR SPREADING EVANGELISM. THEY FURTHER SAID THAT REV. GRAHAM'S UNPRECEDENTED SUCCESS IN 1973 PROVIDED HOPE THAT EXPLO '74 WOULD BE SIMILAR SPECTACULAR DEMONSTRATION OF GROWING RECEPTIVITY OT WORD OF CHRIST IN KOREA.

4. DR. BRIGHT TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT ROKG SUPPORT WAS REFUTATION THAT KOREAN LEADERS WERE PERSECUTING CHRISTIANS, THAT THERE WAS COMPLETE FREEDOM OF RELIGION, AND THAT TRIALS AND IMPRISONMENT OF SOME CHRISTIAN LEADERS FOR THEIR ANTI-GOVT ACTIVITIES SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED REASONS FOR REDUCING AID OR CHANGING US POLICY IN KOREA. HE CONSIDERED RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN KOREA GREATER EVEN THAN IN US, WHERE EVANGELISM IN SCHOOLS AND OTHER PUBLIC PLACES WAS HINDERED BY SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE DOCTRINE.

5. COMMENT: DESPITE CONSIDERABLE PERSONAL AND THEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EVANGELIST EXPLO '74 SPONSORS AND MEMBER CHURCHES OF NCCC-K AND CATHOLICS, ALL CHURCH GROUPS ARE INTERESTED IN THIS DEMONSTRATION OF GROWTH AND DYNAMISM OF CHRISTIANITY IN KOREA AND REPRESENTATIVES OF MOST CHURCH GROUPS AND RELIGIOUS WELFARE ORGANIZATIONS ARE EXPECTED TO ATTEND. THERE IS BOTH AWARENESS AND CONCERN AMONG SPONSORS OF EXPLO '74 THAT OCCASION MAY BE USED FOR DEMONSTRATIONS BY ANTI-ROKG CHRISTIAN ELEMENTS ATTENDING. BECAUSE OF CONCERN KCIA REPORTEDLY HAS WARNED URBAN INDUSTRIAL MISSION AND OTHER CHRISTIAN SOCIAL ACTION LEADERS TO STAY AWAY FROM PRAYER MEETINGS. EMBASSY HAS AS YET NO OVERALL ASSESSMENT TO WHAT EXTENT YOIDO RALLIES CAN OR WILL BE CONTROLLED.
HABIB

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